

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 05908 201743Z

53

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 5908

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG MPOL GR

SUBJ: CHANGES IN HELLENIC MILITARY HIERARCHY

REF A. ATHENS 5848 B. USDAO ATHENS 200715Z AUG 74

1. REF B LISTS NEW ASSIGNMENTS TO TOP POSITIONS IN SHAFC AND HELLENIC ARMY. AS NOTED REF A. DIONISIOS ARBOUZIS NAMED AS NEW CONCHELFOR. LATTER HAD OUTSTANDING RECORD PRIOR TO RETIREMENT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING APRIL 21, 1967 COUP. SERVICE AT SHAPE AND ON CYPRUS IN ADDITION TO KOREAN EXPERIENCE GIVE HIM UNUSUALLY VARIED INTERNATIONAL EXPEREIENCE.

2. ARBOUZIS SELECTION WHILE SOUND WAS NOT OBVIOUS. HE WAS NOT KNOWN AS ACTIVE OPPONENT OF PAPADOPOULOS AND IOANNIDES REGIMES, WHICH WOULD MAKE HIS APPOINTMENT LESS LIKELY TO STIMULATE RESENTMENT THAN WOULD THAT OF ACTIVE OPPONENT. HE HAS BEEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH MILITARY AFFAIRS FOR 7-1/2 YEARS, BUT BRINGS TO POSITION OVERRIDING ADVANTAGE OF BEING UNTAINTED WHILE HAVING RESPECTED RECORD IN PAST. APPVNTMENT OF NEW MILITARY LEADER AMENABLE TO GOVERNMENT IS PATTERN FAMILIAR IN RECENT GREEK HISTORY.

3. IN ADDITION TO ARBOUZIS, KEY POSITIONS FILLED BY NEW
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 05908 201743Z

MEN ARE CHIEF, HELLENIC ARMY AND COMMANDER, "C" CORPS.

FIRST POSITION FILLED BY LTGEN DAVOS, WHO MOVES UP FROM "C" CORPS COMMAND. DAVOS KNOWN AS TOUGH, NO-NONSENSE SOLDIER WHOSE INTOLERANCE FOR IOANNIDES WAS WELL-KNOWN EVEN BEFORE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT. NEW "C" CORPS COMMANDER, LT GEN. GRATZIOS, WIDELY REGARDED AS MOST EFFECTIVE AND BEST QUALIFIED GENERAL NOW SERVING. AS COMMANDER OF HEART OF GREEK FIELD ARMY, WHICH NOW FACES TURKEY, HE WOULD CONTROL THE BATTLE IF CONFLICT WITH TURKEY OCCURRED.

4. TIMING OF CHANGES CLEARLY REFLECT FACT, ANNOUNCED BY PM CARAMANLIS IN HIS AUGUST 15 SPEECH, THAT GREECE WAS NOT PREPARED FOR MILITARY SHOWDOWN WITH TURKS IN CYPRUS. PRIOR TO THAT DECISION, CHANGES IN KEY COMMANDS COULD HAVE BEEN DANGEROUSLY DESTABILIZING. AUGUST 10-11 MOVEMENT OUT OF ATHENS OF TROOP UNITS WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN USED TO INTERVENE ALSO WAS ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE TO CHANGES.

5. CHANGES AT TOP CLEARLY REFLECT ENHANCED CIVILIAN CONTROL OF MILITARY IN GREECE. AT SAME TIME, QUALITY OF FEW OFFICERS IN KEY POSITIONS STRENGTHENS TOP LEADERSHIP OF MILITARY, SINCE BONANOS AND GALASTSANOS WERE NOT HIGHLY REGARDED AND WERE REPORTED TO HAVE HAD INCOMPLETE CONTROL OF THEMSELVES AND THE SITUATION DURING CYPRUS CRISIS. MOREOVER, CHANGES WERE POLITICALLY NECESSARY INASMUCH AS BONANOS AND GALASTSANOS WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN WILLING TOOLS OF IOANNIDES WHOSE RETENTION IN THEIR POSITIONS BELIED THE RETURN TO CIVILIAN CONTROL.

6. FURTHER CHANGES WILL OCCUR AS POSITION CHANGES ARE REFLECTED IN ECHELONED REASSIGNMENTS AND PROMOTIONS IN LOWER LEADERSHIP LEVELS. PROMOTIONS TO MG TO FILL EIGHT VACANCIES MAY BE EXPECTED IN ENSUING WEEKS. IT IS WIDELY ANTICIPATED THAT BG IOANNIDES WILL BE PASSED OVER FOR PROMOTION, AND PROMOTION OF A JUNIOR IN GREEK MILITARY LEADS TO AUTOMATIC RETIREMENT OF THOSE SENIOR TO HIM. THUS, THIS OLD SOLDIER MAY BE ALLOWED TO FADE AWAY THROUGH THE NORMAL MILITARY PROCESSES THEREBY REMOVING HIM FROM ACTIVE DUTY AND FROM THE THREATENING POSITION OF INFLUENCE HE STILL MAINTAINS.

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 05908 201743Z

7. ALTHOUGH ITS EFFECT SHOULD NOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED, THE SERIES OF CHANGES IN GREEK MILITARY LEADERSHIP OVER PAST 14 MONTHS HAS THINNED OUT EXPERIENCE AT CERTAIN LEVELS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE AT KEY SHAFK AND HAC LEVELS, WHERE LOGISTICAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING LIKELY TO BE NOTICEABLY WEAKENED. HOWEVER, HELLENIC ARMY GEARED TO FIGHT ESSENTIALLY A DEFENSIVE WAR ON GREEK SOIL AND THIS

DEFICIENCY NOT REGARDED AS CRITICAL. TASCA

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